

## Black Cherry

*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.

Black cherry is also called wild cherry, rum or whiskey cherry, and just plain cherry. It is a member of the Rose family, as are the apple and peach, and therefore is sometimes referred to as “fruitwood”. It is probably found in every county of the state. It will grow on almost any site, but attains its best form and quality on rich, moist soils on north and east facing slopes.

The heartwood is a light reddish to orange-brown color, sometimes with a greenish cast. The sapwood is creamy white or yellowish and most often quite narrow compared to the reddish heartwood. The bark is dark reddish brown, smooth at first, then becoming fissured, scaly, and almost black in older trees. The wood is semi-ring porous and close-grained. Plain and quartered sections show annual growth rings clearly, but sometimes they are less distinct on the endgrain. The wood is moderately easy to dry and exceptionally stable. In Missouri, cherry often has dark mineral stain and gum pockets, which detract from both its beauty and value. It machines and sands well, but will burn against a sawblade or router bit. In the marketplace, it ranks second only to walnut as cabinet wood, but the scattered availability in Missouri reduces its value.

The wood is used in fine furniture, wood, carving, paneling and engraver's blocks. It is available as veneer and lumber, although high grade black cherry is hard to find. It is an excellent wood for home workshops.



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